

REPORT ON THE INTERROGATION OF
SS Ostuf Willy LAQUA
BdS OSLO A66 VI.
AKERSHUS PRISON, OSLO - 8 APR 46

1. PREAMBLE:

LAQUA is undoubtedly an intelligent man, though opinion differs amongst his colleagues as to his efficiency. Many describe him as a good, but empty, talker whilst others state that his work was always well-conceived and well-executed. Above all, he seems to have had the right way of handling men, and of obtaining the support of colleagues and connections wherever he went.

All statements made by LAQUA have, as far as possible, been checked by reference to other prisoners available in OSLO. There is a remarkable lack of knowledge amongst LAQUA's colleagues as to his activities both previous to his coming to NORWAY and during his stay IN NORWAY and FINLAND. Many of LAQUA's statements strike the interrogator as possibly incorrect, but throughout LAQUA never contradicted himself and contrived to give an appearance of absolute honesty.

When reading this report, the above remarks should be borne in mind. His pre-Norwegian history in particular may require a close check before its truthfulness can be accepted.

2. PERSONAL HISTORY UP TO 1933:

26 Jun 09 LAQUA was born in TILLOWITZ/POLAND. His father was a painter by profession and travelled a great deal; LAQUA saw him rarely. LAQUA's mother died in 1914. LAQUA's father, Finnish by birth, fought on the German side during the war. He later became a German subject. His mother would appear to have been Swedish by birth, later to have become German or Finnish or both. LAQUA is not sure. He was brought up by an aunt and later by friends, attending school first at KATTOWITZ and then at TILLOWITZ up to the age of 15 years.

1924/27 As most of LAQUA's family were in the timber trade in FINLAND, he was apprenticed with a timber firm in BRESLAU.

1927/28 After 3 years in BRESLAU, LAQUA spent one year with the Adriatische Import & Export Gesellschaft in VIENNA as a voluntary employee.

1928/29 He spent one year with a timber firm in BREMEN and then another year with the timber firm of Speralsky in LUBECK.

1929/30 LAQUA worked with his uncle KORPALAINEN in the timber trade in IMPIIARHI/FINLAND.

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1930/33

LAQUA went to SWEDEN. He worked for a few months in a timber firm in STOCKHOLM, but was dismissed when Russian sales of timber depressed world prices so much that the timber trade suffered everywhere. LAQUA was afraid that if he left SWEDEN, his working permission would not, subsequently, be renewed and, after losing his job in STOCKHOLM, he took employment as a waiter and later as restaurant manager in STOCKHOLM, FALUN and KARLSTAD.

3. PERSONAL HISTORY FROM 1933 UNTIL 1940:

Early 33

At this time, LAQUA's permit to remain in SWEDEN was not renewed, and he had to leave the country. He, therefore, returned to LUBECK. With the help of a friend, Senator BÜHMKE, who at that time was in charge of LUBECK's economic administration, LAQUA found employment with the local government. He was promised that, after four years' service in all administrative and police branches, he would be allowed to take an examination qualifying him for the "Higher Service".

1937

LAQUA married Greta ROCKSIEN, the daughter of a well-known Socialist Trade Union Leader in LUBECK. This subsequently caused many difficulties for him, and he was not admitted to the examination mentioned above.

Oct 39

LAQUA found that his earnings were too low to keep his family and gave up hope of promotion in the local administration. He, therefore, gave notice and left his employment, whereupon he was called up ("dienstverpflichtet") and posted to the Scandinavian Section of ABP (Censorship of Mail) in BERLIN.

4. POLITICAL REMARKS:

On being employed by LUBECK local government, LAQUA applied for German citizenship. He was naturalised in due course. Simultaneously, he joined the NSDAP and the SS, but he did not carry out any functions in either.

In 1937, LAQUA was nominally transferred from the local SS unit to the SD. He states that this was due to two causes: he never had time to attend SS exercises and meetings; and he had for some time served with the Stapo and with other Police formations during his informatory work in all departments. LAQUA insists that he never carried out full-time or even part-time voluntary SD functions. LAQUA was promoted SS Ustuf in 1938 and SS Ostuf in 1941.

5. ACTIVITIES IN NORWAY & FINLAND:

End Apr 40

LAQUA was ordered by Abwohrstollo BERLIN, which was in charge of ABP, to obtain a passport from the Foreign Office and to travel at once to OSLO. There he

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reported to Reichskommissar TERBOVEN, who employed him for some time as personal interpreter and on investigation of some economic matters. From that time onwards, LAQUA was a bone of contention between the Reichskommissariat on the one hand and FEHLIS, Bds OSLO, on the other. Whilst the RK was keen on using his services, FEHLIS claimed LAQUA as he was still on the strength of Stapostelle KIEL; this was due to the fact that LAQUA had been working at Sipo Aussonstelle LÜBECK at the time he left LÜBECK in 1939.

In practice, LAQUA was paid by Bds OSLO, though, for some time, he simultaneously was paid by RK also. He was alternatively given tasks by both authorities. His position never was quite clear to himself, nor even to the Heads of the Personnel Departments of RK and Bds.

Jun 40

LAQUA was posted to KIRKENES to erect and take charge of the local RK Dienststelle. This consisted of some 5/6 officials and covered the Eastern portion of FINNMARK, the Western portion of that province belonging to the RK representative at TROMSØ. Simultaneously, LAQUA was placed in command of the Sipo Aussonstelle and the Grenzpolizei Kommissariat KIRKENES.

LAQUA obtained much insight into conditions in Northern NORWAY; he spoke fluent Norwegian and Finnish and was very popular with the local inhabitants. The RK often tried but never found a better-suited Head for its KIRKENES Dienststelle. The Sipo also later sent other officers to take charge of the post but, on occasions, had to fall back on LAQUA for advice.

Jan 42

On his way back from leave in GERMANY, LAQUA was called to see TERBOVEN in OSLO. He was ordered to go to ROVANIEMI/FINLAND to be liaison officer between RK and the 20th Army. There he was concerned with Economic and Welfare matters.

Mar 43

LAQUA was sent to KIRKENES to take charge of the RK Dienststelle.

Feb 44

He returned to OSLO and was given a special task in the Forstabteilung (Timber Department) of the Economic Section of the Reichskommissariat. He was to regulate the labour position and improve working conditions and food rations for forestry workers. Though it appears to have been generally thought that this work was merely a pretence to cover different tasks, he was to undertake for the Sipo, LAQUA hotly denies this. Indeed, there is no proof that he had other duties, and RK personnel interrogated on this subject declare that he was given this job on account of his knowledge of the timber trade.

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- Sep 44 LAQUA was once more sent to FINLAND, where he was to carry out another welfare mission for TERBOVEN. When LAQUA arrived, however, the retreat was just starting and he was then given different orders by Bds OSLO (FEHLIS).
- Dec 44 On returning to OSLO, LAQUA was finally allocated to Bds OSLO Abt VI. He was given leave in GERMANY and, on that occasion, visited Amt VI in BERLIN, where he saw several people.
- Feb 45 LAQUA returned to OSLO and took up his work with Abt VI as Referent for FINLAND.

6. ACTIVITY WITH STAPO IN LÜBECK:

During the period 1933/1939, whilst LAQUA was being trained for a responsible position in the civil administration of LÜBECK, he was repeatedly employed at Stapocassonstello LÜBECK. He first worked there in 1936 and returned for several months in 1938, and finally again in 1939 up to August of that year. Although he spent some time in all departments, he was mainly employed in Abt II A (Communism), II P (Foreign Press and Mail) and III (Counter-Espionage). The fact that LAQUA has a fluent knowledge of all Scandinavian languages made him particularly useful in the last-named department. On three or four occasions, he was detailed to accompany visiting parties of Danish Police officials as interpreter on tours to BERLIN, HAMBURG, DRESDEN etc., and, in return, he was several times invited to visit DENMARK with similar parties consisting of German Police officials. He thus made many friends in Scandinavian countries, whose number was increased by persons he met at the annual meetings in LÜBECK of the "Nordische Gesellschaft" (Nordic Association).

LAQUA states that in approximately 1937/38 the Stapo in LÜBECK was instructed to obtain information on Scandinavian countries. Actually, this task was mainly carried out by those Stapo units which were located near the frontier, such as FIENSEBURG, HAMBURG, KIEL and WARNEMÜNDE. The informatory activity was controlled by Reg.Rat. HELLER at Gestapo in BERLIN. HELLER himself had valuable connections, the following two of whom are known to LAQUA:

Lawyer PONTOPPIDAN of COPENHAGEN.
Police Official PELVING of COPENHAGEN.

The WARNEMÜNDE Police also had connections in DENMARK. Stapostelle HAMBURG concerned itself with DENMARK as well as SWEDEN: they were, for instance, successful in uncovering the WOLLWEBER Organisation, which was concerned with sabotage against German, Italian and Japanese ships. The only opening towards SCANDINAVIA from LÜBECK was the shipping traffic to COPENHAGEN and MALMÖ. To LAQUA's knowledge, no use was, however, made of this beyond interrogating travellers on general conditions in those countries. In addition, information was occasionally obtained on the activities of German refugees in Scandinavian countries.

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7. LAQUA'S TASKS IN NORTHERN NORWAY:

LAQUA was stationed at KIRKENES in 1940/41 and again in 1943. Insofar as his activity was concerned with Reichskommissariat matters, it was purely administrative and economic, and is not of CI interest. From the Sipo and SD point of view, Northern NORWAY was a quiet and uneventful area. KIRKENES originally was only a Grenzpolizei Kommissariat, but a Sipo Aussendienststelle was included at a later date.

On occasions, there was Russian activity in the KIRKENES area. The Russians landed agents at points on the VARDANGER peninsula. Those agents had only informatory tasks. They were sometimes collected again by Russian craft some time after they had been landed, but usually they had to make their own way back to RUSSIA through FINLAND. LAQUA states that their capture often depended on close cooperation with the Finnish State Police. His efforts in this direction were not, however, popular with the Norwegian authorities, as the Finns attempted to employ the opportunities of contact which they thus obtained for propaganda purposes in FINNMARK.

LAQUA also mentions the visit in 1941 of SS Ustuf KÜHN of Abt VI, BGS OSLO. KÜHN asked LAQUA to obtain information of military, political and economic interest concerning RUSSIA. LAQUA was not, however, able to procure such information. What scraps he did obtain were included in the usual SD reports sent to OSLO at periodic intervals.

In neither of the two above-mentioned capacities was LAQUA concerned with political matters. Those were covered by the local representative of the Einsatzstab. This position was at various times held by the following:

Reichstag Member Lorenz LOEWER,
NSDAP Kreisamtsleiter VOIGT,
SA Stubaf Kurt BABERSKE (under arrest in OSLO).

8. FIRST VISIT TO FINLAND - 1942:

LAQUA did not have any intelligence tasks on this mission. He went to FINLAND on the personal orders of TERBOVEN for the following two purposes:

a) Although the 20th Army, which was stationed in FINLAND, used a large amount of timber, the Finnish authorities would not allow Finnish timber to be used. All timber had, therefore, to be felled in Northern NORWAY and brought to FINLAND. This caused considerable deforestation in NORWAY and also transport difficulties. LAQUA succeeded in establishing friendly relations with HILLILÄ, later Finnish Home Secretary, at that time responsible for forestry, and the problem was satisfactorily solved.

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b) It was TERBOVEN's policy to supply considerable quantities of welfare goods to the German Army so as to gain influence in this quarter too. It appeared, however, that more than half of the supplies sent to the 20th Army never reached their destination. LAQUA was to discover what happened to them.

These two tasks engaged LAQUA's attention for a whole year, during which he spent a great deal of time visiting many parts of the country.

9. SECOND VISIT TO FINLAND - 1944:

In Sep 44, shortly after the Finnish capitulation, TERBOVEN again dispatched LAQUA to FINLAND. He was to secure the stocks of welfare goods, which TERBOVEN had sent to the 20th Army, and ensure that they were returned to NORWAY. When LAQUA arrived in ROVANIEMI, where 20th Army Headquarters were located, he found such a shortage of transport as to render his task impracticable. On informing OSLO of this fact, he received the reply that he should remain in FINLAND and would receive further instructions from the 20th Army.

A few days later, LAQUA was ordered to report to Major HACKE, the Ic of the 20th Army. Major HACKE passed on instructions from SS Oberführer FEHLIS, Bds OSLO, to the effect that LAQUA was to interview all Finns who voluntarily surrendered to the Germans and to have those who could be used by the Germans sent to OSLO. Though at that time it was expected that large numbers of Finns would surrender, very few did. LAQUA extensively toured the front with this task in view. At first, he was merely responsible for prisoners taken by the 7th Mountain Division and by Division KREUTLER, as SS Division NORD was covered by a detachment of the Germanische Leitstelle. This detachment consisted of the following officers:

SS Stubaf Graf SCHIMMELMANN (a relative of the Danish family)
 SS Ostuf SCHEIDT (a former member of ROSENBERG's staff)
 SS Ostuf Kaj LAURELL, as Adjutant (Finnish subject)

This detachment was dissolved at KARESUANDO during the retreat and its members returned to Germanische Leitstelle in BERLIN. Their sector was subsequently covered by LAQUA.

Altogether, LAQUA was only able to dispatch a total of about 80 Finns to NORWAY. They were collected by a sub-section of the Germanische Leitstelle NORWEGEN, which was located at TROMSØ, and was commanded by SS Ostuf FEIERTAG. From TROMSØ, the Finns were sent to OSLO. The original intention had been to raise a Finnish force in the German Army to carry on the tradition of the 27th Prussian Jäger Battalion in the 1914/18 war. This object evidently being unattainable, prolonged discussion started between various units in OSLO and BERLIN as to the employment of the 80 odd Finns. LAQUA does not, however, know any details.

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10. ACTIVITY WITH Bds OSLO Abt VI - 1943

On returning from FINLAND in Dec 44, LAQUA was allocated to Abt VI of Bds OSLO (SS Stabaf GRÜNHEIM). In view of the great strain which his mission to FINLAND had imposed on him, he was first given some leave in GERMANY. He took this opportunity to confer in BERLIN with the Head of Referat VI D 3 of Amt VI (SCANDINAVIA - SS Stabaf MUSSINGER) and also with SS Stabaf BROSS, former Amt VI representative in HELSINKI and Prog. Kapitän CELLARIUS, Head of Sonderkommando NORD. The two latter were engaged in working out plans for a close cooperation between the Germans and the Finnish resistance movement against RUSSIA. Although LAQUA's objects were similar, no definite agreement was reached in cooperation with BROSS and CELLARIUS. He therefore, returned to OSLO and there took up his new task. cc 2

LAQUA was to build up a FINLAND Referat in OSLO. Apart from the task described below, he surveyed the Finnish Press and also all correspondence with FINLAND. He interviewed persons coming from FINLAND in order to obtain information on the trends of Finnish politics and economy.

In addition, LAQUA was to establish communication with FINLAND and the Finnish Resistance Movement by sending suitable agents into that country. Little progress had been made with this scheme at the time of the German capitulation.

11. APPRECIATION OF PRISONER AND INTEREST OF CASE:

LAQUA is intelligent, widely travelled, and due to his quiet and sensible manner he is able to make a good impression. It would appear that he was able to make friends wherever he went and to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of most people he came into contact with.

On the other hand, he seems to have been a master at making mountains out of molehills. His system was to make little problems which he had solved appear great ones, and to colour information which he had obtained in such a way that the recipient considered him a genius. In fact, TERBOVEN seems to have considered LAQUA a most valuable personality, and FEHLIS also had a good opinion of him. Those who knew LAQUA in FINLAND, however, considered him ruthless and devoid of any feelings where his own advancement was concerned, and they accuse him of giving false reports, partly to advance his own ends. The present interrogator is more inclined to the latter view.

It is, therefore, considered that what information LAQUA can give must be treated with some reserve. His further interrogation is recommended only to confirm evidence already obtained from other sources.

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PWIS(Norway)/103.

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SECRET

12. RECOMMENDATION:

LAQUA's personal history is described above; it should be carefully checked before being accepted at face-value.

He speaks all Scandinavian languages fluently and has a thorough command of the Finnish language. Furthermore, he has many friends and acquaintances in all Scandinavian countries.

LAQUA is a person who will not be kept down and who will, if released, try to achieve a position of importance whether legally or otherwise. It would be difficult to accuse him of any specific crime - the only time he took part in a Sipo action in NORWAY, he appears to have acted merely as an interpreter, evidence to the contrary being inconclusive - it is nevertheless strongly recommended that he should not be released in a hurry; and that once he is released, a close watch be kept on his movements.

GS Int/PWIS(Norway).
Akershus Prison, Oslo.
9 Apr 46.

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